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SUBJECT: BOSNIA: AMBASSADOR FOCUSES ON POLITICAL SITUATION,
EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION, POLICE REFORM IN INITIAL
PRESIDENCY MEETING

Classified By: Ambassador Charles English for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Ambassador made his initial call on the Bosnian Tri-Presidency October 9, stressing US support for Bosnia's Euro-Atlantic integration, the need for constructive leadership from the Presidency, and the importance of consensus in moving the reform agenda forward. All three Presidents affirmed their support for a strong US-Bosnian bilateral relationship, but engaged in mild sparring when discussing police reform and the current political situation in Bosnia. Presidency Chairman Zeljko Komsic voiced his support for a substantive police reform deal that would not leave fundamental issues undecided. President Haris Silajdzic reprised his usual lines about the need to develop a true democracy in Bosnia, not an "ethnocracy." President Nebojsa Radmanovic expressed his strong support for a consensus-based approach to reform, and his hope that real progress could be realized on police reform in the coming weeks. End Summary.

DEVELOPMENT KEY TO EURO-ATLANTIC FUTURE

¶2. (C) Ambassador made his introductory call on Presidents Komsic, Silajdzic, and Radmanovic October 9. Ambassador stressed that the United States continued to support the development of effective state-level institutions capable of leading Bosnia on a self-sustaining path towards Euro-Atlantic integration. "The success of BiH is the success of the United States," he said. Ambassador told the Presidents that he hoped a deal on police reform could be reached in the next few days that would bring Bosnia "a step closer to Europe." Ambassador cited defense reform as evidence that functioning state-level multi-ethnic institutions could be established. Ambassador inquired whether the Presidents could identify any specific areas where the United States could play a particularly useful role in advancing reforms. Ambassador also stressed the importance that Bosnia contributes to regional stability as the Kosovo final status process concludes.

US IS NUMBER ONE PARTNER

13. (C) President Komsic told the Ambassador that Bosnia's integration into the EU and NATO is appreciated by all three constituent peoples, but that Bosnia's political leaders had failed to make the compromises necessary to advance their candidate aspirations. Komsic affirmed that the United States is Bosnia's strongest strategic partner, and had done much over the past decade and a half to rebuild the country following the war. Komsic, while noting that he had "personal views about the current situation," asked his two colleagues to address the broader issue of the stalled reform process, implying that political parties were directly responsible for the impasse. President Silajdzic told the Ambassador that the United States had an important role to play in making Bosnia a real pluralistic democracy, but that today Bosnia was an "ethnocracy" not a democracy. Ambassador responded by observing that democracy must evolve in a manner that recognizes societal conditions, and that Bosnia had to develop its own government through consensus based reform. For his part, President Radmanovic stated that Bosnian leaders "could have done more" to develop their state and move closer to Euro-Atlantic institutions, but that consensus on reforms was key and "fundamental disagreements" remained.

CITIZEN KOMSIC WANTS A SUBSTANTIVE DEAL ON POLICE REFORM

14. (C) On police reform, President Radmanovic stated that he hoped to see "the necessary steps in the next several weeks" that would permit the signing of the EU's Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) in the next "4-5 months." President Komsic echoed points he raised in an interview over

the weekend, stating that he hoped political leaders would reach a police reform deal that does not "leave important issues unresolved." Komsic said that, "as a citizen not politician," he would accept a political deal that contained some aspects with which he personally disagreed if it was a comprehensive agreement that definitively concluded police reform. Silajdzic declined to comment on police reform.

ENGLISH